DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 221 413 SO 013 938

AUTHOR Beery, Robert W.
TITLE Doing History.
INSTITUTION Rochester Public Schools, Minn.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 40p.; Photographs and some small print may not reproduce clearly in microfiche.
AVAILABLE FROM Rochester Public Schools, Minnesota Community Studies Project, 200A Coffman Building, Rochester, MN 55901 ($1.00).

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Education; *History Instruction; Learning Activities; *Local History; *Primary Sources; *Social Studies; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

When elementary students examine primary sources and local historical sites to gain firsthand information about life in the past, history becomes more relevant, exciting, and enjoyable. To help students understand that history is not just what is in a textbook, this student resource book focuses on making them aware that history exists all around them. Activities in which students assume the role of a historian and actually "do" history include the following: (1) discovering an unknown old object, telling the class what it is, and describing its historical background; (2) looking for and finding information about old buildings, unusual parks or schools, old businesses, and street names; (3) visiting cemeteries and doing tombstone rubbings; and (4) reading old newspapers, diaries, and letters. A suggested class project is to write a history book about the students' town or neighborhood. The booklet uses language familiar to elementary students. Many photographs and graphics are included. (NE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED221413

DOING HISTORY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

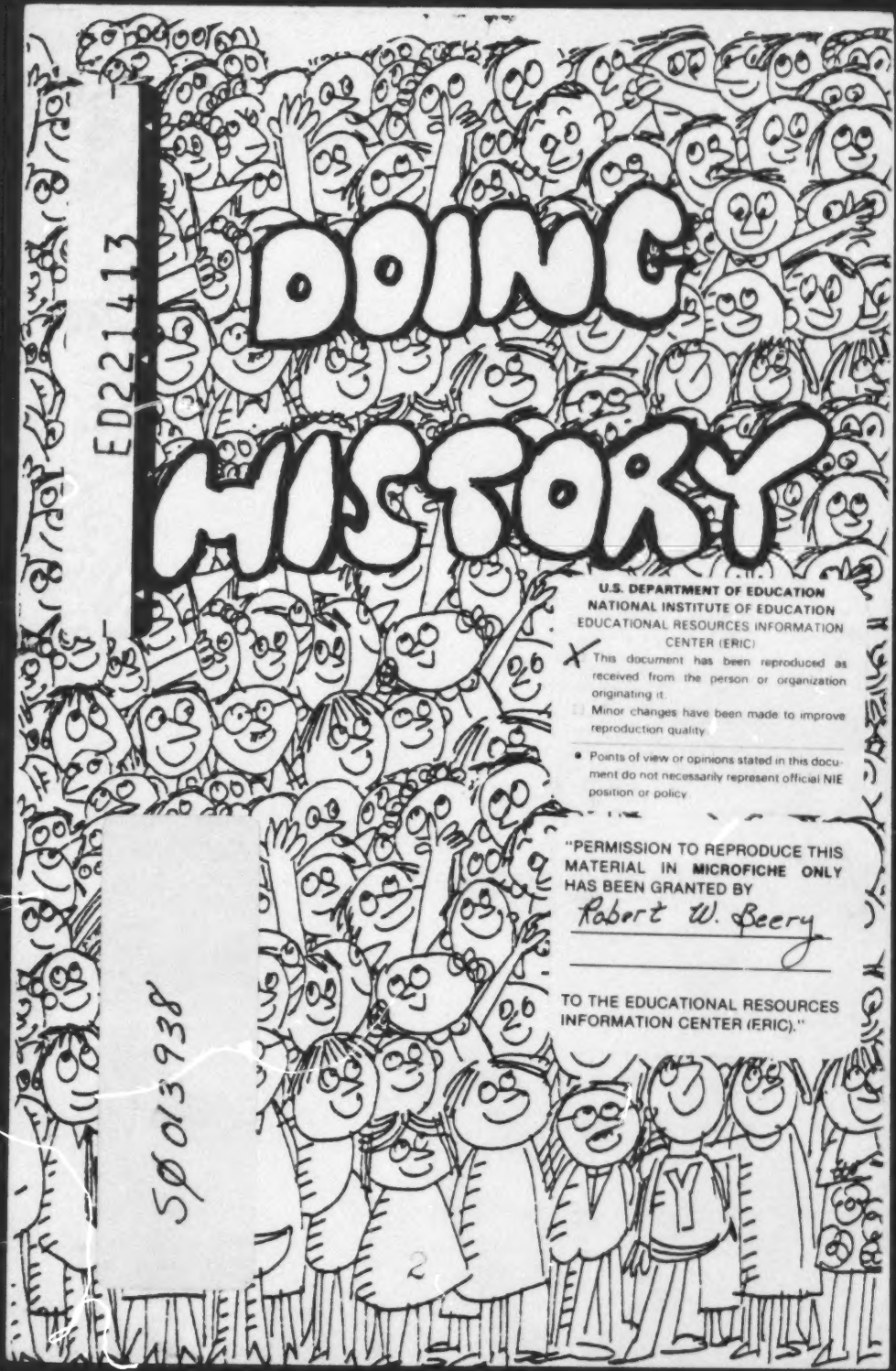
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Robert W. Beery

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SO 013 938



Doing History

Photography and Layout Design
by Robert Todd

Written by
Robert W. Beery

A Component of

Minnesota Community Studies Project
Rochester Public Schools
334 16th Street S.E.
Rochester, Minnesota 55901

Copyright 1978

Independent School District No. 535
"All Rights Reserved"

DOING HISTORY is part of a complete unit of study called LOOKING AT OUR COMMUNITY available from the Minnesota Community Studies Project, Rochester Public Schools.

MAR 15 1982

Doing History

Most of the time we think of history as something that's safely tucked away in a textbook. Some of us think what we read in history books is interesting, especially when it is an exciting story about someone like Harriet Tubman helping slaves run away to freedom or the story of a bloody battle like Custer's Last Stand at the Little Big Horn.

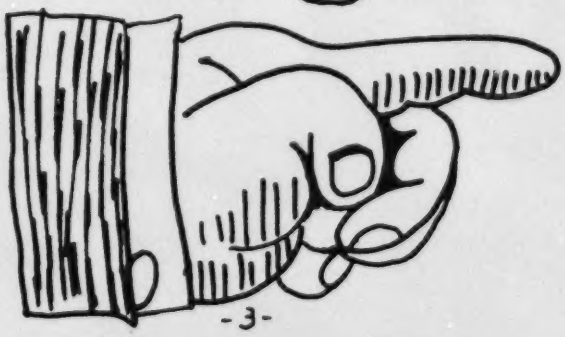
Some of us find parts of our history books pretty dull - things like tariffs and debates in congress can drive us crazy if we're not careful! Many of us think one of the worst parts of a history textbook is the tough "check-up" questions at the end of a chapter — especially when we have to write out all of the answers to them for tomorrow.

Let's get one thing straight. History is <u>not</u> a textbook and

"check-up questions." No, it's not. A textbook tells us <u>about</u> history. But history itself is what historians do when they tell us about life in the past.

Deciding what really happened in the past and why it happened and deciding what part of that story to write about is what's fun about DOING HISTORY.

SO LET'S MOVE ON



THE SEARS CATALOG

When you looked at the pages from The 1927 Wish Book you were doing history. You were looking at, reading about, and thinking about things that could have been used by people who lived in your town in 1927.

We do history to find some answers to the questions:

What was life like in the past?

Why did people live as they did in the past?

Now that seems simple enough. But instead of just finding answers, we usually.....

discover more questions:

Did people in our town really dress like that?

How many people here had cars like that?

What was a school day like then?

We had to find people to talk to about what we'd found in the catalog, people who remembered living back in 1927.

A big part of history is our sources of information about the past — the catalog and people who lived then are sources. Also, history is questions - the questions we ask as we look at or talk to our Sources.

And there are a lot of different kinds of sources.

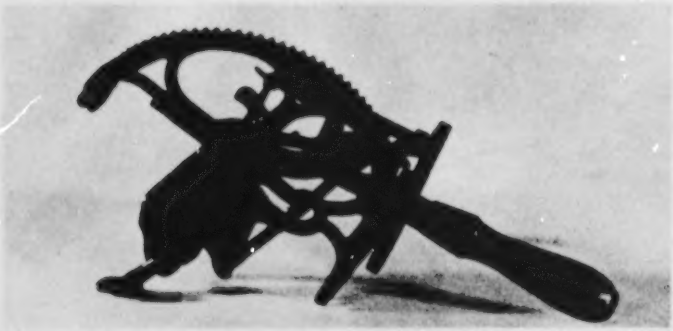
Mrs. Engelhart's WHATZIT

What's a whatzit?

What's it used for?

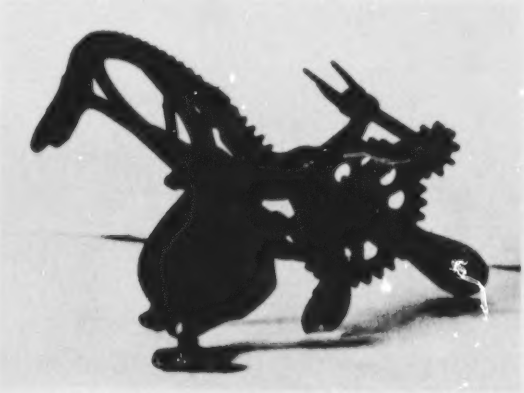
Who used it?

How long ago did people use it?



A close-up of the Whatzit

If you can't answer these questions -- Tell who you think might have the answers.



Another picture of the Whatzit

Mrs. Engelhart works at a historical museum called the Olmsted County Historical Society. She had to find out about her whatzit too. Your teacher has some of the answers Mrs. Engelhart found when she asked questions about her whatzit.

Before going on, Wake your Teacher up and insist that he or she hunt up this information for you.

Check-up Questions*

1. What is it?

2. What sources of information did Mrs. Engelhart use to find out about her whatzit?

3. What does this whatzit tell you about life when people used whatzits?

---

* Not all "check-up questions" are so terrible. The ones I write are pretty good!

The whatzit is history. It is also an old piece of junk! One famous historian, Edmund S. Morgan, said, "History is junk." We can learn a lot about people who lived in the past just by looking at the junk they left behind.

AND

DARE NUMBER 1

I dare you to find some old junk that's no longer used by anybody today. Find out how it was used and explain to your class what it tells you about life in the past.

Some of this junk can be found in an old attic, if you're lucky enough to have one. Or, you might find it at your grand — mother's house. However, please don't refer to any of your grandmother's old possessions as junk.

If you have a town or a county historical society museum like the one where Mrs. Engelhart works, you might be able to borrow one of their old objects,

but like your grand mother, museum people don't like to hear someone call their valuable old things "junk!" So be careful.

If you can't borrow an old object, then do what I did, take a few pictures of it and bring them to class.

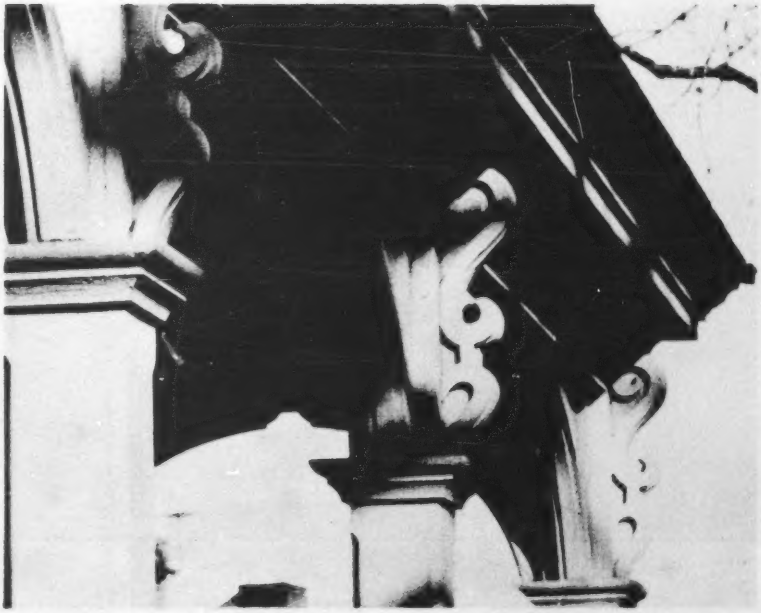
Anyway, I dare you!

BY THE WAY

There are some special **DO IT SHEETS** that will help you do any of the things I dare you to do in this reading. After you've finished working with this reading, your teacher will share those sheets with you, but you may have to remind him or her that these cards are here in your room.

OPEN YOUR EYES

History is all around you. It isn't hidden away in the attic, in Mrs. Engelhart's museum, or at Grandmother's house. The buildings all around you were made in the past and they can tell you something about the past in your town. The pictures here tell you some things about the past. Look at each picture closely and decide what you can learn about the people who lived then.



Why don't new houses look like this?

Would you rather live in a house like this or a brand-new house?

18

O.K. Now that you've done some thinking about these places, share your ideas with your classmates.

DARE NO. 2

Walk around your town or neighborhood until you find an interesting old building. Then go home and get a camera or a sketch pad and pencils and go back and get a picture of the building.*

Now, find out some interesting information about this building by politely asking the owner or occupant about it. You may have to do a detective's search to really find out about the place.

Good luck!

---

*Of course, you could take the camera or pad with you the first time.

Some Other Stuff To Do

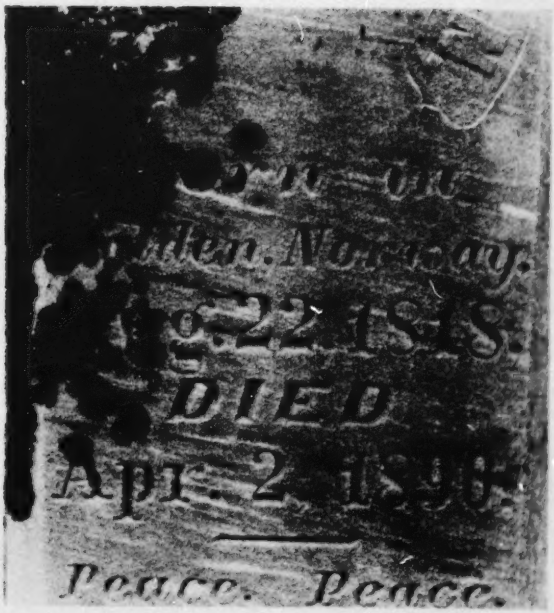
1. Check the street names in your area and see if you can find out what these names mean. Of course, you may not be able to do this if you live in a place like my town -- my house is on 28th Street and I work at 2nd Street and 5th Avenue Southwest.

2. Check on unusual names of parks and schools in your area -- perhaps they are named after someone special in your community's past.

3. Find an old business and ask the owner or manager how long it has been there and what it was like years ago.

The Cemetery a Lively place

If you aren't particularly turned on by buildings, even interesting old buildings, there's one other place you might visit with your camera or sketch pad.



I've been trying to show you that the history of your town isn't something that's dead and gone forever. And the best place to prove that is at a cemetery!

Look at the tombstones I found at one of my favorite cemeteries. What can you tell about life and death-from the tombstones in these photographs?

Of course, you would have to look at a lot of stones to find out if your ideas based on these stones applied to a lot of people living (and dying) in those days.

Perhaps you can see why I'm really turned on by cemeteries. Everytime I go through an interesting town or village I've never seen before, I head for the cemetery. Now I've had people traveling with me who think I'm a little weird, but I know that cemeteries tell a lot about a place.

DARE No. 3

Visit your local cemetery and photograph or sketch some interesting tombstones that give you some ideas about life and death in your town. Check out those ideas by examining the entire cemetery and write a few paragraphs telling what you find there.

Be Sure to go there during the daytime!!

Some people think the best time to visit a cemetery is on a moonlit night when the wind is howling in the trees -- but they really are weird-- their photographs never turn out!!

I Dare you to —

RUB

a Tombstone

One day I was enjoying a little country cemetery, when I saw a young man rush up to an old tombstone, stretch a large piece of white paper over the front of the stone, use hunks of masking tape to fasten the paper over the front of the stone, and start rubbing the paper with

a brown crayon. After a few minutes, his paper was all brown, except where letters and designs had been carved into the stone. It was beautiful — really !!

He told me lots of people rub tombstones as a hobby.

There are two reasons for rubbing tombstones:

1. When a stone is very old and you can't read it clearly, the rubbing will show you what it says.

2. People rub especially interesting stones, put them in picture frames, and hang them on their walls.

Why don't you find a really interesting tombstone, make a rubbing of it and

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE LATEST NEWS ABOUT YESTERDAY

Historians usually get the most information from sources that they can read. They really get excited when they find a stack of newspapers from long ago. Most of us don't have old papers lying around the house. However, there are a couple of places you might look for them.

Here is a part of an old newspaper we found in our library.

LLD IN LCH

NEW REASON FOR HIGH COST OF LIVING.

Washington, Jan. 6.—That $25,000,000 was spent in 1916 for influencing elections, was the assertion of Senator Owen at the opening session of the Popular Government league. Senator Owen said this item of expenditures is based on reported and known expense. He added that such vast outlays of money for influencing elections is one of the chief causes for the high cost of living.

WILL TRY TO LIVE ON 25 CENTS A DAY.

New York, Jan. 6.—An experiment intended to prove that a normal man can exist on an expenditure of 25 cents a day for food will be undertaken next week by a "diet squad" of twelve young policemen.

Police Commissioner Arthur Woods said his department hoped through the experiment to give housewives "the message of today on economic and healthful food."

STOCK RECORDS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

d
rve
the
ns for
caded

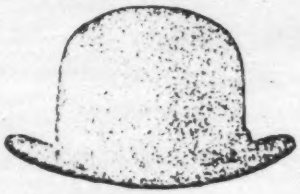
2
)

—

airy
RSIAN
INENS,
desir-

The Gordon Stiff Hat

THE LATEST OUT.



LOOK AT IT.

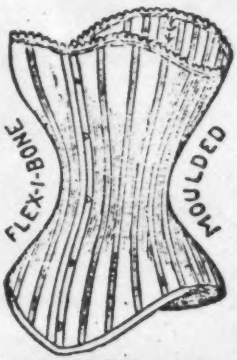
MEN'S R. R. CASSIMERE SACK SUITS

$2.99

....200 PAIR....
MEN'S ODD PANTS

Formerly sold from $3.00 to $6.00, to close at

$1.50 to $3.00 a pair.



Design of "Flexibone Moulded" Corsets.

The design of the corset while simple is so perfectly adjusted to the form, and so natural in its easy and uniform pressure, that no part of the body is unduly constricted. The graceful lines of the garment are so true to nature that not a line of beauty in the human form is concealed, but every grace is heightened and every movement strengthened.

ME'

ev

w
s

L
bo

Me
....SC

from 25
TURBA
—all pri

Men's
Fancy

Cai
Depa
.....BOD
SUPERS, a
We think w
we have ev
and UPI

WE
DE
ME
BE
Re

I FEET &

-25-

Also, you might find copies of old newspapers at your local newspaper office or at a local historical society. Also, weekly newspapers printed today often carry a column like this one:

90 Years Ago

Miss Susan B. Anthony asserts that 26 members of the United States senate are in favor of women suffrage.

Detroit, Mich.: An extraordinary accident occurred at Belleville, a few miles from this city, Friday night, which is almost unparalelled in medical annals. A farmer named Fanning was looking over an old revolver, when the weapon was discharged, the ball entering Fanning's left temple and lodging in the brain. Every one expected to see the injured man drop dead. Instead of that, however, he laid down the weapon and prepared to look after the wound. A surgeon was summoned and found that the bullet was imbedded deep in Fanning's brain. To the amazement of the doctor, the wounded man was not only alive, but thoroughly conscious and rational. The wounded man eats, drinks, and appears to be cheerful. The only sign of the accident is a large hole in the left temple. ■

February 8, 1922.....For the first time in history, women's names were included in the list of jurors drawn for the March general term of district court, Judge S. A. Flaherty presiding. The list included Mrs. L. G. Graves of Chokio, Mrs. John Schmidt of Donnelly, and Mrs. J. C. Morrison, Mrs. W. C. Light, and Mrs. William Hope of Morris. **

February 7, 1913.....This was the first season that automobiles were in use throughout the winter. There was little pleasure driving, but those who had to take long drives into the country found the closed autos more comfortable than the open rigs, to say nothing of the time saved. The snow interfered some, but not to the point that travel had to be suspended. **

February 9, 1930.....The movie at the Strand Theatre featured Joan Crawford in her first talking picture, "Untamed". The film was described as "An amazing romance, sweeping you from the South American jungles to the gilded haunts of New York society". Included in the 15 cents and 25 cent admission price were a news reel and comedy. **

---

* Morris Tribune. Morris, Minnesota, Thursday, November 4, 1976.

** Swift County Moniter. Benson, Swift County, Minnesota, Friday, October 22, 1976.

DARE No. 4

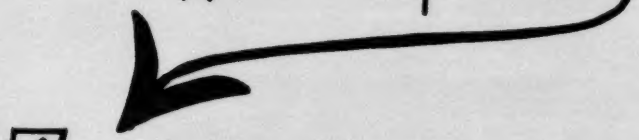
Find an old local newspaper and write a summary of the interesting things you discover in it about your community's past.

Please handle the newspaper with care -- it is a valuable old source of information and paper can be damaged easily.

If you can get permission to borrow an old paper, that's great! Share it with the class.

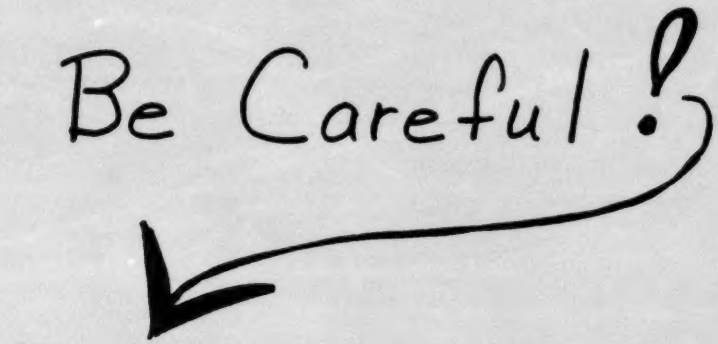
READ ALL ABOUT IT

Some Other Stuff to Read



1 If your family has an old letter or a diary that was written by someone in your community, write a summary of what it tells about the writer's life.

Be Careful!



2 Your older sister's diary from last year or her love letters from an ex-boyfriend are history, but reading them without her permission might shorten your life in this community!!

Check-up Questions Again *

1. Go back over this booklet and write an answer to the question:

What is history?

Warning: simply copying the first statement that begins "History is..." on page 2 is not enough. Look over the whole booklet and write your own answer.

2. List five sources of information mentioned in this booklet.

3. Tell which of these sources you think would be most interesting to examine.

---

* These "check-up questions" are some of the best I've ever written!

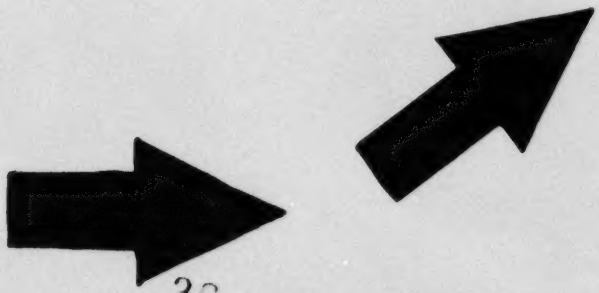
Watch out!
The most
fun part be-
gins on the
very next
page ——
Are you
ready? —
Are you sure?

T
H
E
N

THE BIG DARE

You do it!

I dare your whole class to do your own history book about your town or neighborhood. You could include short writings like those suggested in this booklet, interviews with old people, photographs and drawings you make, or borrow old photographs from a historical society, and lots of other stories and things you think would be interesting. You could even write your own "check-up questions"!



Why do it? Well, if you think some things about history books are exciting -- then write some exciting history. If you are one of those people who think most history books are dull -- then write something that's not dull! Do interesting history!

REMEMBER history is:

-- a bunch of questions about the past.

-- a lot of different kinds of sources.

-- an historian (you?) finding answers and deciding what to write down for others to read.

AND.....

-- the story the historian (you?) actually tells about life in the past.

If you've got any guts and decide to take me up on this dare, the next step is to do some thinking about what to include in your book. Your teacher has some "DO IT SHEETS" to help you plan your adventures as an historian. Remind him or her to try to find these cards for class tomorrow.

Produced with funds from
ESEA TITLE IV, PART C
PL 93-380

Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
1978